

# SALVATION OF FAUST

by

Wm. L. Gage

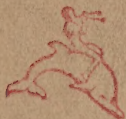
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THE SALVATION OF FAUST



THE  
SALVATION OF FAUST

*A STUDY OF GOETHE'S POEM*

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO

THE SECOND PART AND THE PROBLEM OF LIFE

BY

WILLIAM LEONARD GAGE



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## PREFACE.

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IT is one of the glories of Lessing that he conceived the plan, and partly executed it, of writing a "Faust" in which the keynote should be Aspiration and Salvation; and had he done so we should have had a work greater than even Nathan the Wise. But it was left to Goethe to carry this out; and in what manner and to what a majestic height of attainment it is my task in this book to show. Berlioz, in giving the name "The Damnation of Faust" to his superb and thrilling treatment of the old Faust legend, has taken but a part of the work as planned by Lessing and executed by Goethe; yet even in his

libretto how plainly is the Goethe influence to be seen. Still, in his work, as in Gounod's and Mr. Irving's, the great Goethe conception of Aspiration and Salvation is seen only in Margaret ; not at all in Faust.

It is safe to say that the line of development which will be found in this book could not have been possible for years after "Faust" was finished. The old prejudice against Goethe, largely based upon the invariable habit of studying him in his youthful years and those spent in Weimar before the Italian journey ; the fascination of that splendid youth in the Storm and Stress period of his life, filled with loves and longings and vagaries, with Titan power and overwhelming charms of face and manner and utterance, — this, added to the conviction that the Second Part of "Faust" was, in all regards, inferior to



the First, incoherent, crabbed in style, pedantic, and halting, caused it for years to be spoken of with disrespect, and warned thinkers from its pages. But this is past; a new interest has set in, and, in all fair probability, "Faust" in its complete form is to become the *Divina Commedia* of our age, the greatest of our nineteenth century's literary monuments. Had Dante written in our time, he might have contested with Goethe for the first place; but as Dante presents the theology of the Mediæval Age and Goethe that of our time, the one who is of us and with us must seem the greater as dealing with that which is to us so vital and transcendent.

I may, perhaps, be presumptuous enough to ask my readers to take these pages without a break in the first perusal, and to examine the notes in a second and more leisurely reading. I shall

ask, too, for some indulgence towards my repetitious summing up of the argument from time to time; for, as it is no light task to present the entire argument of "Faust" within this limited space, it has seemed to me well to be sure that my reader be not hurried too rapidly from stage to stage.

HARTFORD, CONN.

## THE SALVATION OF FAUST.

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THE story of Faust, the magician, is one which has been familiar to almost every German for nearly three hundred years. The legend bearing his name and telling of his compact with the devil, that in consideration of all kinds of sensual joy for the period of twenty-four years he should sell his soul, was carried to England near the close of the sixteenth century;<sup>1</sup> Marlowe, Shakespeare's great contemporary, caught it up and produced it in a five-act play, yet never popularized it there; and till Gounod, a Frenchman, made an opera out of it, and Berlioz, a German, made a cantata, and Wills, an Englishman,

made a play out of it for Mr. Irving and Miss Terry, it has never been known to the people at large either in England or America. It will, perhaps, be a surprise to the reader that after Marlowe, and before Goethe wrote his "Faust," there appeared fifty-one dramas having Faust as their theme; nearly all of these in Germany. And in evidence that Goethe's "Faust," though seeming to be the only one, is by no means alone even in modern literature, I add that seventy-two different dramas having Faust as their motive have been written since Goethe's was published.<sup>2</sup>

But I bear in mind that in our land, outside of a small circle of German scholars, and outside of the very large number who owe their acquaintance with "Faust" to Gounod, Berlioz, and Henry Irving, there exists but a slight

acquaintance with the work as a whole, — with its profound treatment of the problem of life.<sup>3</sup> To the popular comprehension “Faust” is the story of a man who sold his soul to the devil as an equivalent for one form of pleasure, caused the ruin of a beautiful girl, and after a wild carouse and a complete exhaustion of the resources of sin, miserably perished,<sup>4</sup> Margaret being saved by her repentance, and Faust being doomed to the loss of eternal blessedness. With the close of what I may call the episode of Margaret, it is popularly supposed that “Faust” ends; and if there be any reference to a Second Part much longer than the First, it is generally dismissed as unintelligible or incoherent, as unworthy of study, and as the product of a great poet in his dotage.

It is to combat and rectify this misapprehension that I write these pages.



I wish to place before the reader the poem in its unity and its wholeness; I wish to show that to end with the First Part without studying the Second is to propound a problem and to postpone its solution; it is to be content with an incident in life, instead of rising to a consideration of the study of human life in its complete sweep.

Before entering upon a statement of "Faust" in its wholeness, however, I must at the outset do away with the popular notion that the First Part is simple and the Second Part unintelligible, and, in fact, incomprehensible. For many, many years I did not attempt to read the Second Part, although I had read the First again and again. I did not attempt it because of the prejudice which was raised against it in my mind when I was a youth. I now declare that I have with me the whole concurrence of mod-

ern comment on "Faust" that it is the First Part that is deep and difficult, that it is the Second which is free from insurmountable perplexities. I do not in this deny that to understand the Second requires a much wider range of learning and a longer experience of life than the First; to follow all the allusions in the second and third acts of the Second Part demands a vaster erudition than even "Paradise Lost." But the great difficulties of the work are in the First Part: the diverging conceptions of Mephistopheles, including the origin and mission of evil, the diverging conceptions of the Erdgeist or "Earth-spirit," the question of the comprehensiveness of Goethe's plan, all these have taxed the skill of commentators<sup>5</sup> far more than the problems of the Second Part. By this I do not mean that there are not difficulties in the Second; the free use

of allegory in which it abounds must of course give rise to unending discussion. This, in fact, was what Goethe intended to do ; and he not only said that he had put many mysteries into it, but he also refused to answer questions which could clear up difficulties. He declared that he intended to bequeath it to those who should come after him as a perpetual debating ground where men of varied views should find themselves reflected ; where men should always be disinterring a buried fund of problems on which to sharpen their wits.

And so I cannot accord with the opinion of Mr. Lewes, Goethe's ablest biographer in my judgment, that the Second Part of "Faust" is a mere heap-  
ing up of undigested materials, having no plan and therefore no key. But that view which was only too common in the first years after it appeared has now

gone, and in the mass of modern comment I find little or no trace of such a notion.

In contrasting the two Parts in respect of difficulty of comprehension, I may perhaps give my own impressions best in this sentence: that the First, however long studied, will still leave in the mind of the reader unsettled problems; while the Second Part, studied with equal care, will open itself to the reader to his own complete satisfaction. He at least will feel that he has the key to its meaning, though he may not be able to make it appear to others as he reads it himself.

In general, it may be said in a word that the story of Faust is the story of Goethe's life. As the "Prelude" is the story of Wordsworth's youth and the "Excursion" the story of his maturer years, so in a far more close and vivid

sense is "Faust" the record of the whole career of that wonderful man who, born in 1749 and dying in 1832, lived through the storms of the French Revolution, and survived long enough to see the opening of the great industrial era which is now at its height. He witnessed the upheaval of thought caused by Rousseau and his school; he witnessed the passing away of the old worship of convention and the coming in of the age of freedom; he saw this, too, ripen into a newer and better stage, and become amenable to wise control; he \* lived till all that is settled and calm and fruitful had come into Germany and into the world. And as his own life was divided into two great parts, that before the Italian visit and that after it, so is his "Faust." The first part of Goethe's life was the Titan period, the Storm and Stress period, the period of



“Werther,” and “Götz,” and “Prometheus;” the second, the period of “Tasso,” and “Hermann and Dorothea,” the period of his long and patient scientific studies, the period of the Second Part of “Faust,” with its tranquillity, its learning, its exhaustive summary of history, its fruitful use of even the mythologers of the ancient world to make clear the meaning of the nineteenth century. *ies*

Goethe once said truly of his poems, “They are all confessions.” I may add that each is a bit of his own biography, told in the most exquisite language, each the mirror of an actual thought, experience, love, fancy, delight, but “Faust” is the summing up of them all. The clue to the study of “Faust,” as to that of all his writings, is therefore a minute knowledge of the life of this most fascinating man ; this figure

who commands the attention of all the age and the most idolatrous regard of millions as no man has done who has ever lived. It is now fifty-seven years since Goethe died, yet it may be said of him alone that every year, so far from dimming his fame and burying his deeds in oblivion, is only quickening the curiosity of men, is only bringing out the minutest details, is making him the most discussed as well as the most wondered man of our, or of any, age. Every year books are published about him,<sup>6</sup> and no signs appear of anything but an augmented interest as well as a calmer judgment and growing enthusiasm, which, while making all allowances for the failures of humanity, is placing him in a light only shared by Shakespeare, Homer, and Dante.

I do not mean to intimate that Faust is Goethe, that is, they are interchange-

able names ; but I may say that Goethe in portraying Faust has depicted himself and his career — all his experiments on life, all his failures, all his successes. And this is one reason why, in reading “Faust,” we see that the other characters are drawn with a firmer, clearer hand than Faust himself. Mephistopheles, Gretchen, Wagner, all are done with bold and decisive strokes ; only Faust has any marks of dimness. Dim, I say, not indistinct, for Goethe knew himself. Like all his dealings with himself he was always cool and deliberate ; the reader may recall Dr. Bartol’s very witty saying that “Goethe loved too wisely and not well.” He was never betrayed beyond himself ; and just as in his youth he was capable of giving up Frederika because she stood in his path, an act of self-abnegation on Goethe’s part which I have seldom

heard praised<sup>7</sup> as it deserves ; as he left Wetzlar and Lotte Buff and Lili Schönerman ; as he could do this and did do this always, so he could take himself in hand and calmly review his career. And this he did, and “Faust” is, in its most simple and rudimentary sense, the story of Goethe’s life.

Of course, the tragedy of Margaret corresponds, taken in its extreme results, with no external circumstance in Goethe’s career ; but the full development in his own penitent heart of that which took place in his youth, the bringing out into logical results and terrible culminations of what he felt in his youthful fascination with Gretchen of Frankfurt and Frederika of Sesenheim, and what he had seen in the heart-workings of Frederika in her disappointment and after her surrender of him, gave him the key to that fascinat-

ing and soul-searching tragedy to which we give the name of "Faust," and to which we should more strictly give the name of "Margaret."<sup>8</sup> There is little doubt that the theme kindled as he wrought it out; that the loveliness of the character of this sweet peasant girl drew his own heart to her; and that he was carried away by his theme. He did not stop his pen till he had reached the close; traced the logic of passion and remorse and circumstance to the bitter end; saw her lost and then saw her saved by the triumphant force of her own penitent heart. Written as all those scenes were in his early youth, while he was between twenty and twenty-five years of age, written while he was in the very thick of his own powerful and tempestuous experience, they are the best, strongest, and most moving lines that he ever penned,<sup>9</sup> and I do not won-



der that they took up a disproportionate part of his whole "Faust," a part which I cannot think that they claimed when he planned the poem.

For I am quite clear that despite what seems to be Goethe's own conflicting testimony, he had even in the year 1772, when he was twenty-three, and during the following years, when he was writing what I may call the "Margaret-Faust,"<sup>10</sup> a conception more or less defined of the whole work; so that, although in a letter to Schiller years after the edition of 1790 was printed he speaks of making a new plan, his words are to be read in the light of his letter to William von Humboldt a few months before his death in 1832, that for sixty years he carried the plot of "Faust" substantially unchanged in his mind. Between 1801, when the First Part was completed in the form in which it was

to remain, and 1824, when he took up in earnest the Second Part, during that quarter of a century Goethe was living his life and thus preparing himself to write the conclusion of "Faust." This he dreaded to begin ; and we owe it to his friend Eckermann (let it not be forgotten) that at the age of seventy-five he took up the task and went on till the age of eighty-one, little by little, not in the old fire of youth, a handbreadth at a time, as he pathetically tells us,<sup>11</sup> until it was done, sealed up, and laid away, not to be published till his eyes should be closed. "Now," he says to Eckermann, — "now that 'Faust' is done, it matters not what I do more ; my life is complete : what I have after this is out of pure grace."

The man Faust, like his prototype Job, may be said to be subject to three temptations ; and singularly they are

the three which are depicted in the New Testament as coming to our adorable Saviour. The Satan of Job is a much more simple and rudimental conception than the Satan of Faust; the trials to which Job was subjected monotonous in comparison with those of Faust. With Job there is a succession of catastrophes: on horror's head horrors accumulate; but they all appeal to the same note in human nature. Following the analogy of the story of the temptation of Christ, I may say that Goethe has caused his Faust to feel, first, the lust of the flesh, then the lust of glory, and then the lust of dominion. As the lover of Margaret he touches the depths of sensual passion; as the all-powerful adviser at the court of the German emperor, where we find him early in the Second Part, he rises to a bewildering height of glory; as a mili-

tary hero in the fourth act, as the savior of the emperor at a time when his realm seemed to be at a rival's mercy, he takes a place where his reward, commensurate with his services, gives him the special glory which he seeks, who is intrusted with princely sway. The briefest statement of the Second Part of "Faust" is a recognition of these last two great temptations following the one which is the theme of the First Part. The "little world," as it is called, of the First Part opens out into the "great world" of the Second Part, the life of the palace and the camp.

The culmination of the First Part is the Salvation of Margaret: the power of penitence to deliver from sin and from its penalty. From her sin and shame, from the abandonment of her remorse, the suffering Margaret is called away to peace and happiness because

she has passed through the gospel conditions and comes into the estate of pardon and redeeming grace. There Faust disappears, and our last view of him is as a doomed man. No conception can do justice to the horrible agonies of mind with which the First Part closes on the betrayer of Margaret, the slayer of her brother, and indirectly of her mother. The repentance of Gretchen has its counterpart in the despair of Faust. But the Second Part, and the whole poem, viewed as a whole, and subordinating the story of Margaret to the whole, is the story of Faust's Salvation ; and so in spite of the great temptations, the lust of glory and of dominion, he comes in the closing scene to a salvation depicted with a grandeur of language and a wealth of illustration which leave behind even the last lines of the First Part. It only



needs a greater than Gounod or Berlioz to set that closing scene to worthy music and we shall have incomparably the greatest work in the world; the one that is highest, deepest, and widest; <sup>12</sup> and I am not forgetting the “Messiah” of Handel while I write this, but I am remembering that ascending line of angels and heavenly presences who greet the redeemed Faust and usher him into the heavenly city; and I am under a sense of the greatness and of the pathos — the heart-stirring pathos — in which all these supernal figures salute him, and choirs of little children; while the voice of the redeemed Gretchen is also heard giving him welcome who in life had done her such woful harm, and yet whom the Divine Love was now ushering into everlasting habitations.

I have given already what may be called the most condensed analysis of

“Faust;” that which makes it the history of a final deliverance from the three great temptations of life; the three which, with some external modifications, are given in the New Testament as approaching our Divine Lord, — appetite, avarice, ambition. But so brief a statement will not suffice if we would go further and make it the subject of a more searching analysis. For those who have read the Second Part of “Faust” will remember that after he has revived from the exhaustion of dismay in which the First Part leaves him; after he has entered upon his brilliant career at the German emperor’s court; after his bold stroke in paying the debts and setting the insolvent and pleasure-loving monarch on his feet again; after becoming the idol of all the courtiers by resorting to a trick of finance, whose final outcome should be ruin; after all

this, — the brilliant success followed by the complete failure, — we have still the spectacle of his temptation by the beauty of Helen of Troy. It needs no careful reading of the book to see that this is no repetition of the story of Margaret; Helen is the representative, not of physical beauty simply, but of grace and of all that we mean by Grecian culture. Faust, the man of the North, the man whose mind has been fed on the romanticism of the North, on Gothic architecture and the ballads and tales of the Mediæval Age, is enamored of Helen, who represents all the wisdom and repose of the classic times and lands. It is the story in other form of Goethe and his visit to Italy, and there is good reason, therefore, why Goethe could and should write the third act of the Second Part very early in the century, and that he could

publish the act by itself, a complete work, — an interlude, — which, though a part of “Faust,” could be understood without the rest. There is, I believe, no difference of opinion regarding the grandeur of that third act, known as the “Helena.” When it was published in 1826, during Goethe’s life, and while portions of the first, second, fourth, and fifth acts were still unwritten, he had perfected this wonderful episode, the song of the marriage of Faust and Helen, the song of the birth and death of their son Euphorion. Viewed as a part of the great “Faust” story, it depicts the effort to satisfy the human soul with the ripest fruits of culture; shows the futility of attempting to stifle the hunger of the heart with any products of skill, taste, and thought. Viewed as a part of Goethe’s own life, it was a confession that not even the Italian journey and

all that it gave could solve certain unanswered questions and meet certain unappeased cravings of his nature ; but viewed as a scene within a side chapel of the great cathedral which we call "Faust," it may be regarded as the marriage of Northern Romance and Southern Grace, the old Chivalry of Northern Europe, with its song and arms and Gothic magnificence, and the gentle, cultured, classic Beauty of the South, with its love and melodious language and soothing charm. The child of this union is Euphorion, who Goethe tells us stands for Byron, the representative of both schools, the finest issue, in Goethe's opinion, of both schools ; and in Euphorion's fate Goethe also tells us that he has pictured Byron's fate in Greece, falling on the battlefield a martyr to liberty.

But oh ! how can I do justice in these few words to all the fulness of that



beautiful third act, reproducing as it does the very spirit of antiquity ; written before Goethe's powers had faded, written out of that thorough comprehension of both the North and the South ! He who as a student at Strassburg had loved the old minster so that he discovered with his eye what the original plan had been ; and who, when asked how he knew that in certain details, which he named, the plan had not been followed out, answered, " The building itself told me," — this was the man, this man, who in writing " *Götz von Berlichingen* " taught Walter Scott the art of romance ;<sup>13</sup> this was the man who in his later studies had so drunk in the spirit of antiquity that in his *Faust* he could depict the spirit of the North, in his *Helena* the spirit of the South, and in *Euphorion* the modern spirit in which both are united : not

merely as in a blazing meteor like Byron, but in the tempered and permanent qualities of the best poetry of our time.

The Second Part of "Faust" begins, then, with Faust at the German emperor's court; and his temptation there is the lust of power and glory. His agent and servant, Mephistopheles, suggests the expedient of giving out paper money to pay the imperial debts; it succeeds, Faust becomes the one whom all admire, the most trusted courtier and the most powerful man. Under the stimulus of this success, and desiring to please the emperor, he causes a great spectacle to appear, in which the whole past comes to view, all the men who have lifted the world from its low estate to its higher, beginning with the simple tillers of the soil and ending with the highest representatives of statecraft and skill. It is a picture of the history of

civilization, done with perfect art and with overflowing knowledge. The ancient Fates, the ancient Furies, the ancient Graces, all have their place, not coming forward in forms which dismay, but all of them in their appointed relations to ancient thought and the ancient world of conduct. Poetry and Prudence and Fear and Irony and Wealth — these and fifty others — have their place and their word: and they are all so proportioned each to each that the masquerade, as it is called, is at once a parody on the emperor's court, on life, on history, on the sum of human experience. It is incidental to the Second Part; it may be omitted without losing the thread of the plot, but it is a wonderful picture.

That which confessedly troubled Goethe most in writing his "Faust" was how to make the transitions be-

tween the stages of the play. How to pass, for example, from the opening test of Faust in the Second Part, that of limitless power and glory and its failure to give him lasting satisfaction, and the test of perfect culture; the admiration of beauty in its highest sense and the failure of that test. Goethe's correspondence and his recorded conversations with Eckermann let us into this secret. He had so much to say in "Faust" that he must give his meaning in allegories and the language of symbol. He encountered the difficulty which Schiller saw and predicted, that in the Second Part his matter would be too vast for any frame to hold; hence his enforced use of such images as filled the Second Part, — a line of suggestive pictures drawn largely from antiquity, from the classic world. The machinery to which he was compelled to resort to bridge

over the first act, already described by me, Faust at the imperial court, and the third, the Helena, was accomplished by resorting to what Goethe calls the Classical Walpurgis Night. The Walpurgis Night of the First Part was a coarse and bestial attempt on the part of Mephistopheles to animalize Faust; to take him at the stage where his lust for Margaret had landed him and make him fall in love with creatures which were devilish. Like the coarse snares of Auerbach's Cellar, this fell off from the high and essentially noble nature of Faust, and he was master where it was intended that he should be a victim. But it was impossible for the coarse, strong, violent scenes of the Brocken top to be reproduced in the cooler and more tranquil realm of classic life; and hence the Walpurgis Night of the Second Part is entirely unlike its name-

sake of the First Part. It is the introduction of Faust to the past. It is the elaborate preparation by which the reader is made ready for a transfer of the hero to a place and a time far removed; from the Europe of the Middle Ages to the ancient world of Greece. To make the mind ready for the meeting of Faust and Helen on common ground, to put the mind into such conditions that their meeting, their mutual love, and their marriage shall seem consistent with the whole play,—this, of course, demanded special preparations and enormous skill. To this end, old Wagner, the pedant of the First Part, whose learned talk, erudite but not wise, will be remembered by all, is summoned on the field. He is seen in the act of making a man in a bottle, a little chemically-formed man, and with Mephistopheles' help, he does actually create the



little fellow, a bright spark-like being, Homunculus by name, to whom is deputed the task of guiding Faust and Mephistopheles to the classical world. To this world Wagner himself is not allowed to go. Erudition, dead erudition, has not the key; it must be erudition brightened by esprit; erudition kindled into fire. And yet that can only be the guide. It is not permitted to pass on to reward. Homunculus himself attains incompleteness, and having done his task disappears. Nor may Mephistopheles be the guide. As Faust's servant he must be his companion, but in the classical realm he must change his name and appear in the form of a hateful, witchlike creature known as Phorkyas; for in the classical world the contrast to the fair and the good is not the bad but the ugly.

I freely admit that, were it not for

the brightness of Homunculus, the little man in the bottle, the second act of the Second Part would be, or I may more guardedly say might be, a trifle ponderous. But the old Wagner coming to life again, now a successful man, — Professor Wagner; and the reappearance of the callow youth who in the First Part of “Faust” will be remembered as having been inducted by Mephistopheles into all manner of deviltries, and who concluded to study medicine the better to practice them; and especially the light pleasantries of Homunculus, the little fellow in the bottle, who seems made simply to shine, relieve it, make it pleasant reading, and fulfill perfectly what Goethe intended, carrying us over to the great theme of the third act, written — let me repeat — prior to the rest of the Second Part of “Faust,” and only needing to be put

into right relations with the body of the work.

And, if I may add a word of confession, I will say that it is a problem which I have debated somewhat in my own mind why into that second act Goethe has wrought that long dispute between old Thales and old Anaxagoras : one, Thales, contending that the world was formed in gradual stages and by deposits from water ; the other contending with much force and little politeness that it was the result of volcanic agencies. This view was so distasteful to Goethe, in fact, he carried what I may call a hatred to it so far, that some have thought that he brought it into "Faust" merely to ridicule it ; and those who regard the Second Part as a collection of odds and ends, a kind of old man's rag-bag, take this view of the Thales and Anaxagoras debate on geology. But

when I notice that the two men are working for the conversion of the little man in the bottle, this little fellow who is always striving to be, I can understand that they are seriously called in to help him in his efforts to shine to some purpose. I freely admit that one passage in the First Part of "Faust," the scene known as the Walpurgis Night's Dream, cannot possibly be explained on any theory save that Goethe hated certain men so badly that he took a paper originally written for Schiller's "Museumalmanach," and literally lugged it into "Faust;" into the First Part, too, published when he was in the prime of his life. But I am not persuaded that any such folly as his dislike to Werner and the men who represented the volcanic view of the origin of the earth caused him to violate the proprieties when he came to write the Second Part.

Returning from a digression made in the interest of those to whom I am not a pioneer in this task, I address myself afresh and in a kind of review to what has been said, before pushing on to fresh fields. Looking at "Faust" as a whole I remind you that it is a progressive story, a series of trials followed by victory; it is in the end the history of a saved, and not a fallen, soul. The problem placed before this man who in the First Part comes before us as a great, but dissatisfied scholar, knowing all things yet contented with none, this man who in the depth of his discontent is just saved from suicide by the hallowed relations which the Easter bells and the Easter songs bring back; the problem placed before this distracted and despairing man is, who shall give him a single day — nay, a single hour — which shall be so filled with heart-

easing solace that he can say to it, Stay, stay, thou art so fair. And when the whispering devil, coming first in the form of a poodle, then of a jaunty, bright, alert man, promises to bring such a day, such an hour, Faust agrees to sell his soul for it. He will take all the chances of the life to come. Give me a sufficing Now and you may have all the Then. Here Goethe leaves the old legend, as he does in so many other instances, and reaches out to the conditions of the widest, deepest life. The wager simply stated is this, Give me what I want, what I shall be content to keep that will fill all my desires, and you may have my soul. And then come the trials. I have stated them as three, following the New Testament analogy and summing them up under the most general heads. But we may divide and subdivide. First comes the



trial in Leipzig, in Auerbach's Cellar, the test of the wild student carouse, the trial by revelry ; but it passes entirely over Faust. Yet the love potion which is brewed there and which he drinks, works its disastrous charm, and he comes under the spell of Margaret's beauty ; and so the story of all that woe opens and is unfolded, with its tragic solemnity, heightened, if possible, by the unseemly flirtations of Mephistopheles and Martha. At the end Margaret is saved, a penitent, ransomed soul, and seemingly Faust is damned. Then the Second Part opens with his coming out of the swoon of despair. Nature, the flowers, and the birds of spring minister to him as he lies on the verdant bank. Nature, which allows no one to live on in utter despair even when the headsmen's axe is impending, suffers Faust to revive, and whispers to him her sooth-

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the back. See sample

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ing words : type of the wonderful ministrations of God's mercy. Then comes the entrance on the "great world," the counterpart to the "little world" of the First Part. Mephistopheles is appointed jester to the Emperor of Germany, and Faust, by Mephistopheles' connivance, becomes the powerful man who saves the emperor from bankruptcy. The great event is followed by a brilliant masquerade, of which I spoke before, in which all the history of the world, the whole order of civilization, passes before the emperor : the mimic picture of life, the bridge between the ages, the mirror of the imperial court, the mirror of man in all his joys and sorrows. It is a great study, this masquerade, even if detached from the story of "Faust" and meditated by itself.

But we move on, for we find that not even in the intoxication of this princely

pageant which ushers in a vision of Helen of Troy in all the beauty, the charm, the fascinating and bewildering perfections of her face and form, not even in this is his heart stilled ; for as he in his proud sense of greatness and worthiness and irresistible claim tries to grasp her, she vanishes mid the sound of a convulsion so tremendous that Faust sinks senseless to the earth ; and thus the first act of the Second Part is ended.

Of course the story does not end ; for as I have already said, the second act with its elaborate machinery of Wagner, and the Disciple, and the little man in the bottle, and Mephistopheles, always present, bridges the gulf between Germany and Greece, between the feudal age and the classic age, between northern romanticism and southern grace, and brings Helen and Faust into such relations that in the third act — the great

and beautiful act called the “*Helena*,” published by itself in Goethe’s lifetime and prized as one of the most exquisite fragments in the world — the marriage of Faust and Helen is accomplished, and their boy is born, the beautiful Euphorion, type of Byron, type, too, of the modern spirit, fruit and issue of the two parents, the gothic and the classic thought, herald of the industrial age in which we live.

But the point which we are to hold in our grasp is this: that in this complex trial, this test which comes to his sense of power commanding presence and beauty subduing force, in all this there comes no hour when Faust can say, *Stay, stay, thou art so fair*. Euphorion perishes, a victim to his own ungovernable flight; Helen vanishes from Faust, leaving only her vail and mantle behind. It may all be expressed



in the parallel words of Ecclesiastes : Vanity and vexation of spirit. There is that beyond to which Faust still aspires. The beauty of Margaret, and now the beauty of Helen, meaning all that we call the height of human culture, the supreme beauty of intellect and grace and art, all this leaves him still unsatisfied. "The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself upon it, and the covering is narrower than that he can wrap himself in it," if I may reverently quote the language of the prophet Isaiah.

With the fourth act we come to what we may call plain sailing, and it is plain sailing to the end of the whole work, to the close of the fifth act. The great allegories are over, the wealth of learning, the array of symbols covering meanings and hints altogether too vast for any other vehicle of thought. We

come to the true trend of the book, the *Salvation of Faust*. In the first act he has appeared as the ally and deliverer of the Emperor of Germany; in the fourth, he is summoned again to relieve that emperor. There is a great revolt; a formidable rival is approaching; the monarch whom Faust had assisted when on the verge of bankruptcy now begs for military help, and with Mephistopheles' aid it is granted. Faust delivers the emperor, gives him back his throne in peace, and is rewarded by being made prince absolute of a great tract of land bordering on a mighty sea. It comes to Faust in the exercise of his new dignity that it will be a grand and worthy work to add to even the lordly domain conferred upon him by rescuing from the ocean, Holland-like, a great supplementary tract, which, with Mephistopheles' aid, he

does; and populous cities rise, great harbors filled with mighty fleets appear, and Faust is filled with glory. But all this, like a chapter out of Ecclesiastes, only leaves him empty of heart. The hour does not yet come when he can say, Stay, thou art so fair. And in the opening of the fifth and the last act, we behold him, this great man, this Faust, this prince, with wealth and honor and power and glory, the kingdoms of the world at his feet, so to speak, still asking for that which is beyond. At the opening of the fifth act a most pleasing scene appears; two old people with Grecian names, Philemon and Baucis, husband and wife, are presented to view in their little cottage, where a stranger is seeking shelter. Just in the foreground is seen, and it is told like Homer, a great harbor filled with its ships; and in the background

further away from the sea is a palace which Faust is building for himself. The little hut of Philemon and Baucis stands in the way of Faust; it obstructs the full view of the sea and the tract which he has won from the waves. He endeavors to buy the hut, to pay for it far more than it is worth, to gain it by all gentle arts; and, at last, he empowers Mephistopheles to secure it, but without violence. The wily servant goes out, but finding them obstinate, he kills them and burns their house. Reporting this to his master, he brings about unconsciously the crisis of the whole career of Faust. He sees as by a lightning flash into his own heart; he sees what he is capable of; he reads his selfishness, his folly, his miserable ambition; he is what would have been called a half century ago convicted of sin; he is introduced to himself. There

have been moments before, both in the First and Second Parts, when he has come to a rupture with Mephistopheles, when he has seen how low and blind, how limited in vision, how destitute of high aim and noble feeling, how coarse and Philistine-like the devil is, but these breaks have soon been healed over and the two, Mephistopheles and Faust, have held together. But now it is over. Faust casts the devil off;<sup>14</sup> Faust abjures magic and its infernal aids; he takes that step which in the Bible is so powerfully rendered in the words "Get thee behind me, Satan;" or, again, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

But this, though a crisis, is not one which at once brings light and joy. We have not yet reached the conditions of peace. The poem passes on into greater depths and into thicker darkness. Four old gray-haired women ap-

pear at the door of Faust's new palace ; he hears their words, he knows their names. They are Want, Guilt, Care, and Need. They hold their conference at the gate, and Care passes in through the key-hole and becomes the guest. I know nothing in poetry more solemn than this scene. In whispered words the four had uttered without that another form is drawing near — the form of Death. As Faust hears it he trembles, for to him it is a terrible word. And one who knows how terrible the thought of death always was to Goethe, how he refused to speak of it and to think of it, can understand with what feelings he, a man of eighty-one, penned this scene, this picture of his own life, and wrote, so to speak, his own epitaph. Care enters ; Care utters the words which for the first time bow down this strong man, whose age is represented



at this period to be a full hundred. At length Care breathes upon him, and Faust is made blind. Yet though blind and old, there comes to him, even then, the inspiration of a new hope. All at once he seizes the conception that he will build new cities and perfect new plans and finish the task of gaining dominion from the sea, that other men may be made happy, that, in the language of our modern time, the world may be the better for his living in it, or, in the nobler language of our Saviour, that he may lose his life and yet find it. In his blindness, in his old age, he seizes his shovel and begins his glorious and self-forgetful work. We see at a glance that we are here not only close to the altruism of Herbert Spencer, but to the highest secrets of the Christian scheme of life. And so he dies, in the triumph of his career,

when, at last, the hour has come in which for the first time he can say, Stay, thou art so fair.

And then Mephistopheles and his harpy attendants claim his soul. For, technically, Faust has lost his wager; but heavenly spirits appear and refuse to surrender him, and fierce is the battle of words which is waged. Yet, because Faust has not attained, because he has only looked into the promised land, and, also, because the devil is impotent in the face of penitence, therefore, with all his clamor and bluster, and that of his attendants, he cannot take the soul he claims. The wager cannot be exacted. The domain in which Faust has won his triumph over himself is not admitted to be within the province which Satan rules. It is the victory of the Right, of the Truth; it is the victory of God, and not even the devil has a

lien upon the domain of God.<sup>15</sup> And so Faust is saved ; and the poem comes to an end with such splendors and glories and ineffable magnificences as no language of mine can possibly suggest ; and it is all penetrated and punctuated with the sharp, harsh, biting taunts and defiance of Mephistopheles, over and above which, in great organ tones, sounds the heavenly anthem, the angelic symphony. Saints now glorified, the spirits of just men made perfect, come one after the other and welcome him ; a chorus of blessed boys issues forth to meet him ; angels and younger angels, and yet more perfect angels, vie with each other in their jubilant tumults of rejoicing, and all heaven comes forth to meet the man who has passed his trials, has lived his life, and is more than conqueror. But, oh ! the pathos of that which remains. Up to this time it is like Mil-

ton, it is like Handel, it is like the great Lift Up chorus of Gounod's "Redemption;" but the end is ushered in with notes so tenderly and tremulously human that even in their sweet humanity they utter a louder Gloria than that which went before; for Mary Magdala is there with her welcome, and the Woman of Samaria is there with her welcome, and Mary of Egypt is there with her welcome, and, oh! how shall I write it! with what tender suffusions of feeling, and almost with tears, do we go on to read, "One of the penitents, formerly named Margaret," pressing towards him; she, too, even she, welcoming in heaven her lover, her betrayer, the great sinner, now redeemed and accepted, amid the splendors of the skies. The *ewig-weibliche* even there; the ever-womanly still drawing on; even there the power of the divine love triumphant.

It goes without saying that the reader has been running his own parallels between this story and the whole line of Christian tradition ; the regular teachings of the church. And I must not omit to say that in this last scene Goethe has gone beyond what I have indicated ; he has not left us with the bald naturalism that a man who is noble enough and striving enough solves the whole problem of life. I do not want to read into the poem more than I find there ; but I do find in the last scenes the recognition of divine love, of divine grace ; there is the moving out of heavenly forces toward this man so sore beset with the temptations of life. The angels who escort Faust to the immortal regions thus sing : —

“ Gerettet ist das edle Glied  
Der Geisterwelt vom Bösen ;  
Wer immer strebend sich bemüht  
Den können wir erlösen ;

Und hat an ihm die Liebe gar  
Von oben Theil genommen,  
Begegnet ihm die selige Schaar  
Mit herzlichen Willkommen."

"Saved is this noble soul from ill,  
Our spirit peer. Whoever  
Strives forward with unswerving will,  
Him can we aye deliver;  
And if with him celestial love  
Hath taken part, — to meet him  
Come down the angels from above;  
With cordial hail they greet him."

Is not this a poetical rendering of St. Paul's "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh within you to will and to do after his good pleasure" ?<sup>16</sup>

And yet I cannot claim that Goethe, either in his own life or in that portrayal of his career which he gives in "Faust," attained to what we have a right to call the Christian standard. When Hermann Grimm says that "Faust

is the gospel of human salvation through human activity," he gives what on the whole comes the nearest to Goethe's aim. The great Christian recognitions at the close, the coming out of the heavenly love to meet the man who has advanced towards it, is after all delayed to a point where we must confess that the most of the battle has been fought alone. Every now and then Goethe comes so near the Christian lines that we hold our breath and wonder whether he is to be the greatest of all our allies ; and then we find that only in a constructive sense, not in the plain use of words, can we claim him. I may refer to that touching passage in the First Part where Faust, just on the verge of suicide because he cannot solve the problem of life, with all his learning, is recalled by the Easter bells and song ; but, after all, candor compels us to



grant that it is not because of the inner meaning of the resurrection hymn "Christ is Risen," but because that great strain of faith and the Easter morning bells touch his memory, bring back his youth, and with youth his hope, and he stays his hand. So also that New Testament exposition in the First Part of St. John's verse "In the beginning was the Word." Here, when he passes on step by step and reads into the meaning that the Word is not the mere communication of God's thought in language, but in action, we have to ask, Is Goethe with us or is he against us? But when we pass to the great strain of the poem, there is no doubt in my mind, and I think there can be in no other's mind, that while not bringing out with any clearness and fulness the manner in which the divine love operates in drawing men outward and

upward, — while quite excluding those names and methods which we wontedly associate with the Christian faith, — yet on the judgment side, on that side which is most neglected to-day, the woe of sin, the dreadful penalty of sin, the stupid, blind, gross character of evil, the wreck of life when in alliance with the devil, all this is told with a power and a range of illustration which must make the book a memorable ally to all who are striving to warn men from the wrath of the divine Judge.<sup>17</sup> The poem could not rise above the level of Goethe's own life, but it could rise to that level; a life which had once been tempestuous and wild, full of episodes which men read and do not forget, but a life which in its latest decades was passing on into calmness and strength and outgiving and a wise espousal of all broadest interests. I protest against this forget-

ting of the aged Goethe in the constant iteration of the deeds and loves of the youthful Goethe, as I protest against the forgetting of the Second Part of "Faust" because the First is so thrilling, so tragic, so full of the fire and fascination of youth.

I sum up, then, the upward flight of this man as in three soaring circles: the first, the quest of earthly beauty; the second, the quest of spiritual beauty; the third, the quest of heavenly beauty. From the first two he fell back; but in the third he conquered. Or, if I may yet again depict his upward striving as the search for truth, it would be the longing of the soul after truth gained by the bitter experience of life; then, by seeking beauty as revealed in culture and art and grace; then, by joy attained in the efforts made not for self but for man; and lastly, in the hal-

lowed blessedness which comes from union with the glorified and in the fellowships of heaven.

I will cheerfully confess that not for years have I taken up a study which more puts me in the way of high thoughts and holy living than the study of "Faust;" and certainly never a poem so full of intellectual spur. As a work of culture, it, of course, outranks the greatest productions of the human mind. Take its extent as compared with the longest of Shakespeare's greatest works, take its learning as compared with Milton's greatest works, take its range as compared with Dante, take its pictures of life as compared with Homer, and it will be seen that in its aggregated qualities it may be safely called the highest achievement of the human mind.<sup>18</sup> Goethe, the most furnished man of our time, the most

powerful, the most experienced, gave his whole life to its production ; lived it out year by year and decade by decade, stopped when he had written out his own experience up to a certain date, and then lived on till from his life new lessons should be distilled. But he put into it not only all that he was, he put into it all that he had read and thought and seen ; all that men throughout the entire past had accumulated. His greatest contemporaries, Carlyle in England ; William von Humboldt, Schelling, Hegel in Germany ; Napoleon in France,<sup>19</sup> all looked up to him as the one greatest man of their time ; and all that he had garnered out of the richest treasuries of the present and of the past, he has sifted, culled, condensed, and packed away for us in the wonderful work which we call "Faust."

## NOTES.

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### 1.

It forms no part of my plan to enter upon a discussion of the origin of the Faust legend ; certainly not to trace it in its early course. To a certain extent the same story may be found in one of Calderon's plays ; and it is perhaps not too much to say that it is the substantial thought which underlies the temptation of Adam and Eve. But the Faust legend proper, that which comes out into full light in the early part of the sixteenth century, has been traced by my friend, Mr. Richardson, of the Hartford Theological Seminary Library, with characteristic thoroughness, and forms an exceedingly interesting study taken by itself and without relation to that phase which is my special theme in this essay.

### 2.

The best German edition of "Faust" is Schröder's, in two volumes, badly printed, indeed, like

most German books, but fully annotated and made convenient in many ways. Löper's, too, is an excellent and handy edition. There are others which are good, and the readings do not vary enough to make much choice. Of the translations, Bayard Taylor's and Miss Swanwick's are the best. The former is beautifully printed and profusely illustrated with notes. The latter is quite equal to Taylor's as a translation and is almost without notes. Miss Swanwick is the translator of Euripides, and has, like Taylor, achieved a wonderful success in keeping to the original metres of the poem. There are some portions of "Faust" beautifully rendered by Shelley. Yet he who can easily read German will find that to come to it by any translation is to lose a great charm. It does not seem the same work; it has a foreign look; and it appears a hopeless task to cause any one who does not read German to see and feel its exquisite qualities. This, which is true of almost all translations, is eminently true of "Faust," and one might say that it is worth the pains of learning a somewhat difficult language for the sake of coming into the atmosphere in which one can admire "Faust."



The Concord lectures on Goethe, and Snider's two volumes on "Faust," are so well-known that I need only refer to them.

## 3.

I cannot refrain from referring those who may wish to go even further in their study of "Faust" than I have taken them in this work to Professor Boyesen's (of Cornell) admirable book, not large, on Goethe and Schiller, which embraces as a distinct feature an analysis of the "Faust." It is very fair, and so far as the First Part is concerned, very full, although the whole is embraced in about one hundred and thirty pages. Elsewhere I refer to Coupland's English book, which devotes much space to the Second Part, although it lacks a certain dignity of tone which characterizes Professor Boyesen's pages.

## 4.

Of course we take for granted in this discussion that Goethe has so taken possession of the old theme that practically we ignore its rudimentary form in the "Puppet Plays," the "Folks Plays," and the like. If we are content to regard the modern versions in music and

the spoken drama as merely the old and undeveloped legend put into shape for our time, we may perhaps think them as complete as Marlowe's contemporaries thought his work when it was put upon the stage; but in fact, the Goethe "Faust" is that from which all the modern adopters have drawn, and therefore their work is but fragmentary, for they have not gone beyond the First Part of Goethe's work.

## 5.

The ablest and amplest discussion of these questions is found in the last edition of Kuno Fischer's work on "Faust." He is not to be confounded with Frederick Vischer, an earlier and also a very able commentator. Kuno Fischer has traced the history of Faust with great thoroughness and with great fairness. He shows the close relation between Goethe's conception of the *Erdgeist* or Earth Spirit and the soaring nature of the youthful Goethe. He shows, too, how the poet's half-playful conception of Mephistopheles, the roguish, elfish, witty, wily spirit, the "companion" whom the Lord gave to Faust, passed in time into the malignant and truly diabolical Mephistopheles as he appears in the portions of

the First Part which were written last, as well as in the Second Part. He is also exceedingly thorough in his studies as to the dates of composition, and though not diffuse, he yet brings together into his work of less than five hundred open print pages, a great mass of information touching both Goethe and his "Faust."

## 6.

Goethe societies exist in nearly all the countries where literature is most honored. In England, such men as Edward Dowden, the Shakespearean commentator, preside over them; and the Goethe society of Germany embraces the most eminent men in all departments of science, art, and letters. The recent opening of Goethe's private archives in Weimar and the conveying of these to a special Goethe society is perhaps the most striking literary movement of recent time; and the publication of the results is one of the most eagerly looked-for events in the great circle of scholars.

## 7.

It seems to me that no charge against Goethe's character, certainly in his youth, is less grounded than that he was a man all intellect and no

heart. Not to go beyond the Frederica episode, is it possible to read his diary and the letters of those days and not see the heart-struggles of the man? The fear of offending his father, and perhaps still more the dread of displeasing his sister, the instinct of incompatibility between himself and this young untrained girl, causing him to decide that he dared not go on, all this is no argument that he was not a man of warm, true, and honorable emotions, yet at the command of a wise control. He had not, perhaps, the passionate sensibility of Schiller; but in the capacity of loving, he was, I think, his equal.

Nor do I think it the result of a thorough knowledge of Goethe's character to charge upon him a willingness to trifle with hearts. He had a wonderful openness to all fresh, buoyant natures in both men and women, and in his early Weimar years we find that in both men and women he had a joyful, enthusiastic delight. In this he was different from Schiller, who was drawn almost exclusively to women; his affection for Körner and a few others emphasizing the delicate sensibility which made his friendships with women so conspicuous an element in

his character. But Goethe loved life as life: and I do not find my old and inherited notion that he experimented on young girls' souls, confirmed by later studies. He was easily drawn to artless, healthy, earnest natures; to spirits like his Margaret; and yet when he found that he was being swept into an attachment which would not result in his permanent happiness, he could fly, as he did again and again. In the one case where this capacity of escape failed him, in that of the woman who became his wife, there was a remarkable complexity of conditions: she was clearly one of those robust natures, skilled in the arts of housekeeping and able to minister to the physical wants of a man whose mind was cheered and kept active by women like Charlotte von Stein, and whose social tastes were met not only by the ladies of the Weimar Court, but by gifted women like Corona Schroeter. With all these to warm and stimulate his intellect, he wanted the repose and comfort of a home; and he found it in the society of a woman so common in birth and so unendowed with the graces which would commend her, that it is still a wonder to thousands that Goethe could have made her the intimate companion of his life. It is obvious

that not even yet have we an adequate knowledge of Christine Vulpius on the spiritual side; but that there were gifts and devotion of heart, and more capacity of understanding Goethe than we have commonly supposed, I firmly believe.

## 8.

I cannot agree with those commentators who are so positive in identifying Margaret (or Gretchen, as she is called in many of the oldest scenes) with any person. To assert that she is the portrait of the Frankfort working-girl Gretchen, described with such spirit in Goethe's autobiography, or to assert with equal positiveness that she is or is not the close portrait of Frederica, is to encroach on a domain which is not our own. I admit that Goethe's heroes and heroines are life studies in a very different sense from Schiller's; and in many cases, notably and by his own confession in his borrowing many features of Mephistopheles from his caustic friend Merck, he has portrayed men and women whom he knew; yet seldom in such closeness as to allow us to dogmatize on them. It is my impression that in the Margaret of "Faust," there are features drawn from both

the Frankfort Gretchen and the lovely girl of Sesenheim, the pastor's daughter ; that she has the peasant quality from the former, the naive, sweet, artless charm from the latter.

## 9.

It is a little singular that the publication of Goethe's "Faust" in 1790 called out little enthusiasm ; a few, like Steffens and the Schlegels, recognized its ability and spoke with warmth of its wonderful language ; but the book made little stir. Not so when the whole First Part was published in 1808 ; then it was hailed with acclamation, and from that time to this there has been a chorus of rapture over its singularly beautiful style, its strength, smoothness, fire, melody, and verbal felicity. The Second Part has not been judged so leniently. It is the fashion to speak of it as unpoetical, crabbed, pedantic, verbose ; as exhibiting frequent marks of senility ; a charge which I find greatly exaggerated. Perhaps, as a whole, the Second Part is not so plastic as the First ; it has many words which smell of the midnight oil ; but, as a whole, there is the same liberal use of the terse, strong, people's words ; the same smoothness and finish and



melody. If I may cite the first examples which occur to me, — the waking of Faust at the beginning of the Second Part, the scene in which the aged Philemon and Baucis appear at the opening of the fifth act, the monologue of Helen in the third act, and the wonderful last scene of all, — I may say that they cannot be thought for a moment inferior to the very best writing in the First Part; though, of course, lacking in that fiery quality which is felt everywhere in the older portion of the play.

## 10.

“Faust” was probably conceived as early as 1769, when Goethe was but twenty years old; but he did not begin to compose the scenes much before 1773. During that and the following years the most of the first sketch or Fragment was written. This was published in 1790, and has been recently reprinted. It contains most of the First Part, with certain important omissions which the special student will discover at once, such as the Dedication and the Prologue in Heaven.

## 11.

In a conversation with his friend Eckermann, March 11, 1828, Goethe said: “There was a

time in my life when I could easily produce a printed sheet day by day. My 'Geschwister' I wrote in three days, and my 'Clavigo,' as you know, in eight. I cannot do that now ; and yet I cannot even in my old age lament a want of productivity. Ten or twelve years ago, in the happy days which followed the war of the Liberation, when I was writing the 'Songs in the Divan,' I was prolific enough, and used to compose two or three daily, writing wherever I happened to be, in the country, at a hotel, or in a carriage. Now, while I am working at the Second Part of my 'Faust,' I can compose only in the early morning, when I feel myself refreshed with sleep and have not entered into the vexations of a new day. But how little it is that I accomplish under the happiest circumstances ; only a page at best ; generally not more than a handbreadth ; and when I am not in a good frame of mind, still less."

## 12.

It may not be known to every reader that Goethe's Second Part of "Faust" is now played very frequently in Germany, and that by its adaptation to the taste of our time in its love of the gorgeous and the supernatural, it, like the opera

of the latest school, has a very great charm. It is not unfrequently played in Germany as a trilogy, occupying three consecutive nights; and the resources of the stage, which in Goethe's time would have been entirely inadequate to present nearly all the mythological features of the Second Part, are not much more drawn upon than they are in the more exacting works of Wagner. It does not seem possible that Goethe, or any of his friends, should have regarded it as feasible that the Second Part of "Faust" should ever be presented on the stage; but even in minor theatres, such as that of Mannheim, this is done with great success. Frederick Vischer, the commentator who of all is perhaps the most outspoken in his likes and dislikes, and who is always entertaining even if he be not convincing, attributes all this to the degeneracy of our time; the taste for the gaudy and the merely spectacular. But Vischer has no moderation in his condemnation of all that relates to the Second Part of "Faust;" he condemns the style, the substance, the whole work, considers it the product of a depraved taste, and in no way to be compared with the power of the First Part. He has no fear of Löper, or Düntzer, or any other of the wholesale

admirers, and strikes out always in the most vigorous and entertaining fashion. And yet his views have had but little convincing weight with readers.

## 13.

The reader will, of course, remember that Scott translated "*Götz*" in his earlier days, and caught from it the fire which afterwards burned so brightly in his poems and tales. It is not too much to say that Goethe's influence, through Scott, on English literature is one of the grandest instances of indirect working which the history of authorship exhibits.

## 14.

It is indeed true that subsequently Faust addressing Mephistopheles by the title of "overseer" enlists his aid in his building projects; but the whole tone of the passage shows that the old magical mania is gone; he wants to hear the honest ring of the spade and the shovel; he wants to see the busy crowds of men all active in their tasks. The language of Mephistopheles is plainly that of surrender; he sees and confesses that Faust is no longer in his toils. That which is called in the Christian scheme of life "con-

sciousness of sin " is revealed in various passages ; among others, in the interview with Care, the man's sense of failure comes plainly into sight.

## 15.

Since writing this passage, I find in Coupland's "Spirit of Faust " (London, George Bell & Sons) a passage which confirms this view, and which I will quote here : —

" Although Mephistopheles sees himself outwitted and imagines himself defrauded, he has really not won, but lost, his wager. Faust signed away his soul on condition that Mephistopheles should procure him a moment of bliss sufficient to make him declare that he could wish to linger lazily in such happiness forevermore. Faust has not lost, but gained, the day for two reasons: first, because it is not Mephistopheles who has brought his bliss ; secondly, because that bliss was not the bliss of ease, but a bliss of the fullest activity. Mephistopheles certainly did not help him to the rapture he felt at the fatal moment ; on the contrary, it came as a consequence of his unaided effort. Mephistopheles had done his last service when he burned the cottage of Philemon, but it was Faust's own unsuggested scheme

which exerted the final fascination. Again, it was no moment of passive enjoyment which he pronounced so fair; it was no present moment at all; it was a vision of a remote future when he would be merely a spectator of the realized development of the most powerful creative work of his whole life. An actively engaged people toiling on soil which he had procured for them — such was the dream which he beheld translated into fact in this remote future that brought him the perfect moment. Faust had baffled Mephistopheles all his life, because his self-expression was not the self-satisfaction the fiend had intended; it was not self-indulgence, but self-development, self-progress, an ever-expanding self which furthered the life of a larger and larger circle of mankind."

This work of Coupland's, of 366 pages clear type, so different from most of the badly printed German works on "Faust," is an admirable exposition, and is invaluable for one who does not easily master the German language.

## 16.

It is one of the strange and discordant notes of our time that while some old-fashioned people

are bewailing, and seemingly with justice, the silence of the modern pulpit on the tremendous penalties of sin, this theme has passed over into literature, and on the pages not alone of men like Carlyle, and of women like George Eliot, but in this great "Faust," which is confessedly above all modern works, it is wrought out with a cogency and insight and heart-searching power which not even the sermons of Jonathan Edwards can surpass. The age will not lack teachers of what is called the doctrine of sin while these great names command the attention and the assent which they do to-day.

## 17.

I did not know until after writing this passage that I have on my side the authority of so distinguished and fair-minded an ecclesiastic as the Dutch commentator Van Osterzee, who in his paper on "The Relation of Goethe to Christianity" alludes to the very passage which I have cited, and the close of "Faust" as an interesting and convincing proof that Goethe intended more than a mere artistic use of what may be called Christian machinery. I think, indeed, that for artistic reasons he uses the Roman Catholic mould in which to cast his conceptions; but it is



evident that the recognition of Christianity in the close of this great poem is most striking evidence of the place which religion had in the poet's thought.

## 18.

Vischer, in the introduction to his work on "Faust," compares it to a great fan-shaped city with many breaks in the streets, and with a towering central thought which can be seen from all points. Those who have visited Carlsruhe in Germany will see and admire the force of Vischer's comparison.

## 19.

When, after the battle of Jena and Napoleon's decisive victory over Prussia, Goethe, who had not the reputation of being excessively patriotic, was presented to him, Napoleon was so struck with his aspect and his words that he ejaculated "*Vous êtes un homme !*"

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